

***Eppleton Hall* Stop**

#16 Survival of an Underdog

With her rounded paddle wheel boxes looking like bulging biceps and her tall smoke stack belying her steam power plant, the *Eppleton Hall* easily presents an image of strength. However, perhaps the best descriptor to apply to this small river and harbor tugboat is improbable. For, the *Eppleton Hall* is the last of her kind and her survival is the story of an underdog.

If you had lived in the early days of San Francisco, the sight of a paddle steamer would have been commonplace. Today, it is rare and paddle tugs even more so. By the time the founders of this park tried to save one there were none left in San Francisco. So they had to go far and wide and invest much money, time, and work to bring the *Eppleton Hall* here, for her birthplace was in South Shields, England on the Tyne River. And that was the place to which her rescuers traveled to bring her to her new home.

However, what they started with was anything but seaworthy. When they first started work on her she was a burned-out hulk with her hull mimicking the tide of the river as the water freely flowed in and out of the several holes in her hull plates. In little more than five months, through the miracle of perseverance, the *Eppleton Hall* had passed all government inspections and been made ready for her voyage to San Francisco.

Six months later, after several storms and one instance of running out of fuel, the *Eppleton Hall* steamed into San Francisco Bay. Given that she had been in a dilapidated condition, and that she was not designed to cross an ocean, she had pulled off what many had considered the impossible.

When she was new in the year 1914, very few, if anyone, would have thought the *Eppleton Hall* would survive to be one of the last paddle wheel tugboats and that her survival would place her half way across the world in San Francisco. “Improbable” they would have said, “Improbable.”